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WILDLIFE BUREAU REPORTS
GROWING PUBLIC INTEREST

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"Ding" Darling's Annual Report Tells of
Restoration Work During Year
Ended June 30

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Americans are at last beginning to realize that they have needlessly deprived wildlife of much of its natural domain, and frequently with no lasting benefit to themselves, says J. N. ("Ding") Darling in his report as Chief of the U. S. Biological Survey, which position he recently resigned. Printed copies of the report were released today (December 23) by Secretary Wallace.

Darling says that it is now generally known that it is possible to have our wildlife without sacrificing other desirable land uses. There is land enough, he says, to meet every national need, every requirement of agriculture, industry, and recreation, and at the same time to restore great acreages of submarginal lands to their best uses--waterfowl, fur, and fish production.

"Ding himself was largely responsible for arousing public interest in wildlife," said Ira N. Gabrielson, Biological Survey Chief who succeeded Darling on November 15, in commenting on the former chief's report. Darling himself, referring to the Survey's semi-centennial anniversary celebrated during his administration, attributes the "increasingly conservation-minded public" to the Bureau's work during the past half century.

The Biological Survey, he says, has developed and published the facts regarding the economic, recreational, and esthetic values and the requirements of wildlife and has built up a public sentiment that has made possible the necessary but heretofore unheard-of restrictions on hunting.

The former chief's report likewise cites the acquisition and administration of a rapidly increasing number of bird refuges and big-game preserves. The Survey, Darling further points out, has also furnished to agriculture, horticulture, stock raising, and forestry a service worth millions of dollars annually, by demonstrating and cooperating in the control of predatory animals and destructive rodents.

Emergency Funds Benefit Wildlife

Allotments from emergency funds during the year, Darling reports, provided "the most noteworthy contribution the federal government has ever made to wildlife." Practically all of a million-dollar fund for acquiring refuge lands was obligated. About \$2,100,000 of a 2 1/2-million dollar fund for rehabilitation of new and old refuge areas was either expended or obligated. And nearly all of a fund of \$5,000,000 earmarked by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration for the purchase of migratory-waterfowl refuge areas was obligated. The Biological Survey thus obtained a group of the most outstanding waterfowl-refuge areas in the country.

Restoration activities according to the report, went forward on 19 major refuges and 13 secondary areas and nesting grounds. With 99 refuges previously established, the number of refuges supervised by the Survey or in the process of establishment on June 30 was 137. In addition, the Bureau administers 6 big-game preserves on which birds also are protected, and chains of island refuges are maintained in Alaska and Hawaii.

The Survey's refuge-development program, the report indicates, depended to a great extent on the help of 26 CCC camps.

Hunting Restrictions Also Stressed

Wild-fowl conservation through reductions in the annual kill by hunters has also been stressed as part of the wildlife-restoration program, Darling reports. Studies conducted during the year ended June 30, he points out, led last fall to the "most rigid restrictions in the history of American wildfowling."

In enforcing the restrictions on waterfowl hunting, and the other regulations and laws administered by the Bureau, the Biological Survey, says Darling, has made use of educational methods as well as the strong arm of the law. Bulletins were published summarizing and interpreting the laws and the needs for conservation; many press statements were issued for educational purposes and to apprise the public of changes in regulations; and members of the Bureau participated in conservation programs broadcast by radio; visual information on game conservation included specially prepared exhibits displayed by the Bureau at sportsmen's shows and at expositions featuring wildlife subjects.

The number of U. S. game management agents, Bureau enforcement officers in the field, was increased during the year reported on by Darling from 22 to 25, each agent being assigned to a district throughout which he is responsible for Federal game-law observance. The agents were assisted by 32 deputies, employed from October to April and organized in 8 mobile units or "flying squadrons" of 4 men each to patrol the major waterfowl concentration areas, and to assist game agents on call.

These enforcement methods, the Bureau's report shows, have proved effective. Violations decreased in many areas, and more violators were arrested. During the year the bureau instituted 615 new cases; 424 cases were disposed of, 358 with convictions. At the close of the year 540 cases were pending. At the beginning

of the year 349 cases had been pending.

Reports Research Activities

Research work of the Survey during the year included an intensified investigation of waterfowl conditions, studies of elk, mountain sheep, and of caribou in Minnesota; and research in forest wildlife relationships. Statistics reported by Darling included those showing that 249,829 birds were banded by the Bureau's cooperators during the year; 113 mammal specimens were added to the Survey collection; and 662 bird specimens were acquired, chiefly from North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia.

In connection with the Emergency Conservation Work program, the Survey's fund of dependable information has been in urgent demand, says the report. For 50 years, field naturalists and laboratory workers of the Biological Survey have been assembling a vast fund of information regarding the former and present status and the ranges and movements of practically every known species of North American bird or mammal. Several million card records, for instance, proved of the utmost value to workers preparing a special series of maps of the present and former ranges of important species.

Other Outstanding Events Summarized

Other outstanding features of the year's work summarized by Mr. Darling in the early pages of his report are as follows:

The numbers of injurious rodents were reduced on 11,166,935 acres for the protection of farm crops, range grasses, silvicultural plantings, reclamation waterways, and surface soils threatened by erosion.

Plans for a program of wildlife research, demonstration, and education, through cooperation with selected land-grant colleges and State game commissions in representative parts of the United States were completed and cooperative

studies on national forests were extended.

The Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve (Okla.) was transferred to the Biological Survey for administration as a wildlife refuge and research station, for the maintenance and study of buffalo, elk, deer, Texas longhorns, game birds, and other wildlife.

The importance of the country's fur resource was emphasized in land-management policies, and research on suitable species was broadened on waterfowl refuges that afford good fur-animal habitat.

All outstanding scientific collecting permits for migratory birds were revoked and new ones issued only on an annual basis to insure against misuse.